



Testimony of Jean Nasers
Administrator of Christian Adoption Services

Before the North Dakota House Committee on Human Services on HB 1556

IN OPPOSITION
January 26, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and members of the Committee, for providing the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition of House Bill 1556. I am the administrator for Christian Adoption Services and a member of the ND Pregnancy Resource Network.

Adoption is a profound commitment to a child, one that is made with full legal and emotional weight. At the time of finalization, adoptive parents affirm their understanding that this decision makes their child "as if naturally born to them." This legal principle ensures the child's permanence and security, which are foundational to healthy attachment and emotional development. Many children who enter the adoption process have already endured significant trauma, loss, or instability, and their healing is dependent on the stability and love of their new families.

I deeply empathize with adoptive parents who face extraordinary challenges, such as severe behavioral or mental health issues in their children. Parenting under such conditions is isolating, overwhelming, and exhausting. However, it is critical to remember that biological parents facing similar struggles must undergo a rigorous deprivation process before the state would take custody. Biological and adoptive families must be held to the same standard. This is not to dismiss their pain but to underscore the necessity of ensuring that all decisions prioritize the child's best interests while maintaining the same threshold for relinquishment.

Children who come into adoptive families often carry deep wounds from early experiences, and their healing depends on the unwavering commitment of their caregivers. Attachment takes time, consistency, and support, especially for children with trauma histories. Rather than creating a pathway for relinquishment, I urge the legislature to focus on increasing resources for adoptive families—such as access to trauma-informed therapies, respite care, and intensive family support. These measures empower families to navigate hardships without dismantling the permanence of adoption or undermining the entire purpose of adoption.

In conclusion, while I recognize the difficulties this bill seeks to address, I firmly believe its unintended consequences would harm the very children it aims to protect. I thank the committee for its thoughtful consideration of this suggestion and its dedication to the well-being of North Dakota's families and children.

Sincerely,

Jean M. Nasers
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